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**Council of Europe Action Plan to support democratic reforms in the
Republic of Moldova 2013 – 2016
Progress Review Report**

Document prepared by the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP	CoE Action Plan to support democratic reforms in the Republic of Moldova 2013-2016
API	Association for the Independent Press
ATU	Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia
CEB	Council of Europe Development Bank
CEC	Central Election Commission
CCET	Center of Continuous Electoral Training
CEPEJ	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
CETS	Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data
CM	Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
CoE	Council of Europe
Congress	CoE Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
CPT	Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
DEC	District Election Commission
EaP	Eastern Partnership
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
ECRML	European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EDR	Electoral dispute resolution
ESC	European Social Charter
EU	European Union
EXEC	Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights
GR-DEM	Rapporteur Group on Democracy
GRECO	Group of States against Corruption
HELP	European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP Programme)
LTO	Long Term Observers
MBA	Moldovan Bar Association
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MONEYVAL	Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism
NDS	National Decentralisation Strategy
NPM	National Preventive Mechanism
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIJ	National Institute for Justice
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE
PEC	Precinct Election Commission
PCF	European Union/Council of Europe Eastern Partnership Programmatic Co-operation Framework
PPS	Public Prosecution Service of the Republic of Moldova
RESC	Revised European Social Charter
SJSR	Strategy for Justice Sector Reform of the Republic of Moldova
ToT	Training of trainers
VC	European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission)

I. OVERVIEW

Introduction

The CoE Action Plan to support democratic reforms in the Republic of Moldova 2013-2016 (AP) was adopted by the Committee of Ministers in its meeting of 19-20 November 2013 and launched by the Deputy Secretary General and the Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration on 14 March 2014. The AP supports the country in fulfilling its obligations as a CoE member State in the fields of democracy, rule of law and human rights. The Action Plan is based on the findings of Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms and bodies and takes into account lessons learned during previous co-operation with a view to ensuring coherent and sustainable Council of Europe assistance to the reform process in the Republic of Moldova.

The Action Plan implementation includes needs assessments, legislative expertise, capacity building, training, awareness-raising and peer-to-peer reviews in such areas as: the functioning of democratic institutions and good governance; justice sector reform with special attention on the reform of the Public Prosecutor's Service and the efficiency of the judiciary; the promotion and protection of human rights, including through the strengthening of national human right institutions; freedom of expression and pluralism of the media; and local democracy and decentralisation; as well as confidence-building among communities on both sides of the river Dniester/Nistru.

The present report covers the period from the adoption of the Action Plan in November 2013 to August 2015.

Main Achievements

The Law on Financing of Political Parties and Electoral Campaigns was adopted in April 2015 thanks to continuous advocacy by the civil society organisations involved in the CoE activities. The law contributes to increasing voters' confidence in the election process.

The NGO Promo-Lex (trained by the CoE in domestic observations of elections) was able to cover all polling stations country wide during the parliamentary elections in 2014, contributing to the fairness and transparency of the election process.

The high turnout of first-time voters and a higher turnout of women voters as compared to men could be attributed to the interventions by the CoE (and other international organisations) which targeted these categories of voters during the period immediately preceding the elections.

The "Organic Law on the Judicial System", "Law on the Status of Judges", the "Law on the National Institute of Justice" and the "Law on the Selection, Performance Appraisal and Career of Judges" and the law on disciplinary liability of judges were amended, generally following recommendations provided by the CoE. This legal framework contributes to the efficiency and independence of the judicial system in the Republic of Moldova.

The draft law on the Public Prosecutor's Service of the Republic of Moldova largely reflects recommendations of the Venice Commission which recognised this genuine effort to modernise the existing legal framework, in line with relevant European standards and best practices. A joint opinion (CDL-AD(2015)005) adopted by the Venice Commission in March 2015 welcomed the draft law, which is a significant step to ensure a professional and politically independent prosecution service. Further improvements were however considered necessary in order to bring the law fully in line with existing standards and best practices in the field. The law is submitted for the second reading by the Parliament.

The dissemination of best practices in local democracy involved over 300 municipalities. The process was intensively covered by local TV. The activities strengthened links between municipalities.

The confidence building measures of the CoE have reinforced people-to-people contacts on both banks of the river Nistru/Dniestr. Such contacts, specifically among media and civil society representatives, help to address prejudices and create environment favourable to peace-building efforts.

As a result of the CoE interventions, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria funding was secured for quality anti-TB drugs in the penitentiary institutions on both banks during 2015-2017. This was particularly important for the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, which had not actively benefitted from Global Fund support in the past.

Within the framework of the EU/CoE Eastern Partnership Facility, the Republic of Moldova benefitted from:

- Revision of the legislative framework, particularly on independence and professionalism of judiciary;
- An enhanced system of judicial statistics in line with the CEPEJ standards;
- A strengthened capability to prevent and combat cybercrimes;
- Assessment of the risks to integrity in local government; and
- Strengthened capacities of oversight and auditing of political party and electoral campaign financing.

Framework for Implementation

The Council of Europe and the Moldovan authorities have established a joint Steering Committee to assess implementation of the Action Plan. The first committee meeting took place in June 2015 in Chisinau. The meeting provided the opportunity to make an extensive exchange of views on progress achieved as well review the programming outlook for the future. The Republic of Moldova's commitment to implement the Action Plan was reconfirmed. The authorities' underlined the importance of further development of national capacities for programme management and communication on the reforms process and results.

As of 31 August 2015, there are 6 regional and country-specific projects implemented by the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, the Directorate General of Democracy, the Directorate of Political Affairs as well as the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

In addition, the Republic of Moldova may benefit from participation in the regional components of the EU/CoE Programmatic Co-operation Framework (PCF) for Eastern Partnership Countries 2015–2017 which covers following areas:

- Protecting and Promoting Human Rights
- Ensuring Justice
- Combating Threats to the Rule of Law
- Addressing Challenges of the Information Society
- Promoting Democratic Governance

The projects are implemented in close co-ordination with the Moldovan government and international partners active in the country, notably the Delegation of the European Union, development agencies of the CoE member States and the United Nations.

Co-operation between the CoE and the Moldovan authorities takes into account the activities of other international organisations (EU, UN, OSCE, etc.) and partner States to ensure synergy and complementarity, and to avoid overlapping.

The Council of Europe Development Bank

In 2013 and 2014, the Administrative Council of the Council of Europe Development Bank approved two loans in favour of the Republic of Moldova. The first - a €39 million loan supplemented by a €1 million grant - will part-finance the development and construction of the new penitentiary institution to be built in Chisinau. The second one - a €10 million loan - will part-finance investments undertaken by micro, small and medium sized enterprises, for the creation and preservation of viable jobs throughout the country.

Council of Europe Office in Chisinau

The Council of Europe Office plays an important role in co-ordination and implementation of the Action Plan. It currently employs 22 staff members and is responsible for implementation of 15 projects and assists Major Administrative Entities with implementation of regional and thematic programmes.

The Office facilitates contacts with international partners present in the field. The Office also contributes to the increased visibility of the Organisation's actions in the Republic of Moldova and significantly contributes to efficient and effective use of resources through decentralised project management. The Office provides regular support to different Council of Europe bodies for the organisation of events and project activities in and monitoring visits to the Republic of Moldova.

Overview of Resource Mobilisation

In line with the Council of Europe resource mobilisation strategy, fundraising efforts under the co-ordination of the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes have been concentrated on the Action Plan as a whole. The revised overall budget of the Action Plan is approximately €17.3 million. Funding amounting to more than €7.4 million (45% of the total budget) has been secured.

The European Union has allocated more than €500,000 to the Republic of Moldova through Joint Programmes with the Council of Europe with possible additional support under consideration.

As from 2015, the Republic of Moldova is also benefiting from funding secured through the Programmatic Co-operation Framework (PCF) with the European Union for projects on elections, independence of the judiciary, anti-discrimination and internet governance. Funding of approximately €2.25 million under the PCF has been secured for projects starting within the current programming cycle.

Voluntary contributions coming from 11 member states – Austria, Denmark, Human Rights Trust Fund (Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and United Kingdom), Norway, Liechtenstein and Romania – totalling over €4 million are supporting projects on elections, criminal justice reform, domestic application of the European Convention of Human Rights and the Revised European Social Charter, implementing pilot judgments on detention, as well as confidence building measures for the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. Denmark, the leading bilateral donor, is providing funding of €2 million.

Lessons Learned

The following issues comprise a summary of the lessons learned during implementation of the Action Plan. They relate mostly to operational lessons learned. Some are specific to individual sectors, while others are relevant to all or several sectors:

- Close co-ordination among donors and partner organisations is necessary both at the level of international organisations and national stakeholders.
- The implementation of the Council of Europe recommendations would further benefit from enhancement of the national co-ordination mechanism on legislative expertise provided by the Council of Europe at the request of the national authorities.
- Sufficient absorption capacities of national partners have to be ensured.
- Local capacity development remains an important element of the technical assistance programmes.
- The CoE human rights based approach to technical assistance is an important complement to existing international programmes of assistance in the Republic of Moldova.
- The CoE could play an important bridging role between different state and non-state actors.
- Defining baseline and indicators of achievement to quantify improvements is important.

II. SECTOR REVIEW

1. Functioning Democratic Institutions and Good Governance

BACKGROUND

The recommendations of the Venice Commission and the Congress help the authorities to ensure compliance of constitutional and electoral frameworks with European standards.

In December 2013, the Moldovan Parliament passed anti-corruption legislation relating to the field of the judiciary, underscored by the signature of an Association Agreement with the European Union in June of this year. In November 2014, Moldovans voted for a new Parliament and the anti-corruption agenda featured prominently in the electoral campaign.

In its Compliance Report on the Republic of Moldova of March 2013, GRECO welcomed “the significant, wide-ranging reform process presented by the Republic of Moldova, in which almost all the concerns raised by GRECO in the Evaluation Report have been closely examined.” The report added that “[i]f adopted, the draft “Law amending and supplementing legislative instruments” presented by the Central Electoral Commission should address most of these concerns.” In light of the current political situation, but also having in mind the extent of technical advice previously provided to the respective Moldovan authorities, there is a persistent need for further technical assistance in anti-corruption area, subject to conditionality.

Many of the GRECO recommendations are of continuing relevance and they provide a sound roadmap for the country on anti-corruption reforms. Many of the technical and legal advice papers provided through Council of Europe technical assistance efforts – for example on anti-corruption legislation – also remain pertinent, but it remains for the Moldovan partners to translate this work into concrete action. The Republic of Moldova has most of the formal ingredients of a solid anti-corruption architecture, including institutions in charge of anti-corruption policies and legislation; as well as institutions responsible for prevention and repression. The Council of Europe is an obvious implementation partner for targeted assistance which would be based on continued support for the implementation of the national anti-corruption and anti-money laundering strategies, as well as judicial reform. The CoE intervention should, of course, be closely linked to the GRECO review of its recommendations and previous MONEYVAL evaluation reports.

The priorities of this sector were identified in the Action Plan as follows:

- to support the effective implementation of the principles of European constitutional and electoral heritage in an all-inclusive manner involving both the relevant national authorities and civil society;
- to reinforce the existing national mechanisms in the fight against corruption and economic crime at all levels in line with the CoE conventions and other international treaties.

SECTOR IMPACT

In overall, the quality of anti-corruption action plans, and the mechanisms of their monitoring was improved as well as the quality of draft laws. A large audience of public officials and civil society representatives is aware and trained on good practices of designing and implementing anti-corruption policies. The regional exchange among Eastern Partnership countries, understanding, and co-operation of state experts and civil society representatives working on anti-corruption reforms is enhanced. These outcomes create an enabling environment conducive to the achievement of the goals of the anti-corruption policies.

Adopted recommendations of the Venice Commission, once implemented by the authorities, would further improve the legislative framework related to elections, Public Prosecutor's Service and intelligence and special services of the country. Thus, CoE interventions contribute to fair election process, increased independence and effectiveness of the prosecution and will provide safeguards against abuse of power by law enforcement.

Adoption in April 2015 of the Law on Financing of Political Parties and Electoral Campaigns thanks to continuous advocacy by the civil society organisations involved in the CoE activities is one of the achievements of the Action Plan implementation. As a result of the a series of capacity building activities for electoral stakeholders – members of electoral commissions of various levels, judges and civil society representatives – the CoE has contributed to increased public trust in electoral process, its transparency and a higher level of voter participation. Some results of the parliamentary elections in November 2014 can be attributed to the joint efforts of international community including the CoE interventions in the field of elections:

- a high turnout of first-time voters between 18-21 years-old (4.28%)
- a high turnout of women voters (53.46%) as compared to male participation (46.54%) as a result of awareness campaigns throughout the country;
- even though women constituted 31% of the candidates, due to the fact that a few days before the elections their positions were changed by the parties into non-winning positions, only 21 women (compared to 80 men) became Members of Parliament;
- the NGO Promo-Lex (one of the main partners of the CoE capacity building activities) was able to cover all polling stations in the country during Parliamentary elections;
- the CCET was able to train all District Election Commission and Precinct Election Bureau members due to comprehensive training programmes. They were also able to train judges and party representatives (proxies) on electoral disputes resolution;
- the Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual was able to perform quality media monitoring of elections and issue 5 comprehensive media monitoring reports.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Improvement of the constitutional framework

In January 2014, a delegation of the Venice Commission lead by its Secretary Thomas Markert met with the authorities to discuss the electoral reform in view of the then-forthcoming opinion on the subject. Experts of the OSCE/ODIHR also participated in the visit and the preparation of the opinion adopted in March 2014 (CDL-AD(2014)003). The conclusions contained in the opinion state that the Election Code currently in force provides a good basis for the conduct of democratic elections in the country. The key challenge for the conduct of democratic elections remains the exercise of political will by all stakeholders, and to implement the full scope of the Action Plan. The proposed amendments in the draft, which specify changing from a proportional to a mixed system during a year of parliamentary elections, raise concerns.

The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Moldova requested that the Venice Commission provide an opinion on the “Draft law on disciplinary liability of judges”. In its Joint Opinion (CDL(2014)6), the Venice Commission concluded that many of the provisions included in the draft law are in line with European standards and provided recommendations related to improvement of the provisions on disciplinary proceedings.

The Ministry of Justice of Republic of Moldova requested the Venice Commission to provide an opinion on the “Draft law on amending the Law on the intelligence and security service” and the “Law on special investigative activity”. In its Joint Opinion (CDL-AD(2014)009) the Venice Commission concludes that if the criticism made by the Venice Commission are properly taken into account, it is legitimate that the Moldovan authorities wish to establish a new mechanism for security investigations to enable the intelligence and security service to carry out the special investigative measures (set out in the 2012 Investigation Law) outside of the framework of a criminal investigation.

In February 2015, a delegation of the Venice Commission visited the Republic of Moldova to hold discussions with representatives of the authorities (the Ministry of Justice, the Parliament, the General Prosecutor’s Office, and the Prosecutorial Council) as well as of the association of prosecutors and the civil society. Meetings were also held with international organisations’ representatives in Chisinau. The joint opinion on the Draft Law on the Public Prosecutor’s Service of the Republic of Moldova (CDL-AD(2015)005) adopted by the Venice Commission in March 2015 welcomed the draft law, which reflects a genuine effort to modernise the existing legal framework, in line with relevant European standards and best practices. The Venice Commission provided some recommendations related to the delineation of the powers of the Public Prosecutor’s Service independence of prosecutors and mechanisms for the dismissal of the Prosecutor General, provisions with respect of the prosecutors in the Autonomous Territorial Unit (ATU) of Gagauzia as well as recommendations on harmonisation of the provisions of the Draft Law with those of the Code of Criminal Procedure and any other relevant legislative provisions.

In April 2015, the newly-elected People's Advocate (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Moldova transmitted to the Venice Commission a request for an Opinion on the Law on the People's Advocate (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Moldova. The Venice Commission adopted its opinion on the law in June 2015 (CDL-AD(2015)017). The new legal framework for the operation of the Moldovan Ombudsman is a step forward in the efforts made to reform this institution. The Venice Commission has highlighted a number of important issues which should be further examined and clarified to improve provisions of the law.

Co-operation on electoral matters

Training of judges on electoral dispute resolution (EDR)

In September 2014, the National Institute of Justice jointly organised with the CEC and CCET a training seminar for the judges of the Chisinau Court of Appeal, civil servants of the CEC, former members of DEC Chisinau and representatives of the civil society. The training focused on:

- EDR – issues, standards and best practices ;
- best practices in EDR in the field of candidate registration; and
- best practices in EDR in the field of campaigning.

The necessity of conducting further training seminars for lower court judges ahead of the 2015 local elections was underlined. In fact, during parliamentary elections the lower court judges are only obliged to adjudicate on appeals of Precinct Election Commission (PEC) and District Election Commission (DEC) actions and inaction on election day and later to store the electoral documents and materials. As far as local elections are concerned, the courts will have to adjudicate on all the appeals of PECs and DEC's actions and inaction as well as to decide on the validity of the elections and mandates of elected mayors and counsellors as well as to confirm the list of substitute candidates.

In order to achieve this objective, CCET organised 7 training seminars for judges (April-May 2015) with 157 participants have attended. The CoE experts assisted the trainers in developing the methodology of the training programme.

Training on communications tools for the staff of the Central Election Commission

In September 2014, a two-day training on increasing the communication skills of the staff of the Communication Department of the Central Election Commission. In total 11 participants attended the event which focused mainly on:

- crisis/event communication
- internal communication
- examples on mechanisms of external communication
- use of internet and the social media
- reasons why communication is important for all departments and not only the communication department.

The CoE made a series of recommendations for the CEC on issues to be addressed before and after the elections. In particular the expert advised the CEC:

- to develop an agenda and a roadmap for the implementation of the Communication Strategy of the CEC;
- to use journalistic techniques to increase the impact of CEC official information and Facebook page viewership between electoral periods;
- to adopt the "feature story" style of reporting and never hesitate to take the end user's point of view when reporting on CEC activities
- to write "human stories";
- to develop audience provided content;
- to use photos and possibly other multimedia forms of reporting online;
- to report on activities of CEC Departments when useful;
- to report on local activities.

Technical assistance to increase CCET institutional capacity

From August to December 2014, the Council of Europe provided assistance to the CCET training plan ahead of the parliamentary elections of 30 November 2014. In particular, it contributed to the organisation of:

- One Training of Trainers activity for 20 domestic observers on report writing techniques and international election standards, based on Council of Europe handbooks;
- Training seminars (3 in Chisinau and 1 in Balti) for newly appointed DEC chairpersons on international practice in electoral dispute resolution;
- Three regional training seminars for judges on electoral dispute resolution (carried out in Balti, Chisinau and Cahul);
- One training of trainers on gender issues for the CCET trainers and staff.

In addition to the training seminars, an audio guide for people with visual impairments was recorded. 2,700 CDs with an audio guide were disseminated to the DECs, local councils and schools all over the country. Further assistance to the CCET should be ensured notably for the local elections due in 2015.

Study visit of the staff of the Monitoring Department of the Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual of the Republic of Moldova (CCA) to the French Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel

From 25 to 26 September 2014, the Council of Europe organised a two-day study visit to the French Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel for six staff members of the CCA. The aim of the training seminar was to familiarise the participants with the principles of media pluralism and equality of treatment of candidates. In order to learn the practices associated to these principles, the participants also visited the studios of France TV and Radio France.

Assistance to the CCA should continue in view of the 2015 local elections. In particular, the Council of Europe could help the CCA benefit from more advanced databases that would allow the media regulator to make media monitoring and reporting more effective. More effective systems would allow the CCA to conduct the media monitoring of a higher number of broadcast media, and or increase the range of the monitored programmes to include election content in current affairs programmes (currently the CCA is conducting analyses of only the main news broadcasts of each monitored TV channel).

Expert assistance to the Monitoring Department of the Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual of the Republic of Moldova

A Council of Europe assisted the CCA Media Monitoring Department, during three separate missions that took place in the period preceding the Parliamentary elections of 30 November primarily in the area of training CCA media monitors. The overall goal of these missions was to increase the media monitoring capacities of media regulatory bodies prior to the elections on 30 November. In addition, the consultant was also supporting the CCA in the process of the control of media monitoring data and the related process of producing charts and tables that were used by the CCA as a basis for a quantitative assessment of the media coverage of election campaigns and other political actors.

The concentration of media ownership and reported links between political parties and the media sector could limit freedom of expression. The legal framework governing the media coverage of the campaign could be revised to address high concentration of media ownership and to improve transparency in the ownership structures. Furthermore, the CCA in order to increase its effectiveness in regulating the media activities, could benefit from legislative changes allowing the media regulator to decide on the volume of sanctions in case of severe violations of the law without the need to strictly follow a system of gradual sanctions. The relevant bodies could contemplate its revision, also keeping in mind its implications on freedom of expression and editorial independence of media.

Enhancing domestic election monitoring capacities including the reporting of Promo-Lex

Promo-Lex was the only civil society organisation that undertook a comprehensive observation of the elections process, including parallel vote tabulation and the writing of election observation reports. The Council of Europe assisted Promo-Lex with training seminars of the core team of Long Term Observers (LTOs) on report writing techniques, election observation processes with a particular focus on the monitoring of the campaign finances and electronic voters' registry and communication with media. Promo-Lex had 41 Long Term Observers and 32 LTO Assistants during the electoral campaign. On election day, Promo-Lex ensured 100% coverage of the polling stations by deploying 2,076 Short Term Observers throughout the country. In total Promo-Lex presented 4 periodic monitoring reports, issued 3 election day monitoring statements and 2 press releases on the results of the Quick Count and Parallel Vote Tabulation operations.

Overall Promo-Lex contributed to increasing public trust in the electoral process by conducting long-term monitoring of the pre-election period and post-election monitoring aimed at deterring electoral fraud and providing impartial non-partisan information to the citizens about the conduct of election campaign. It also contributed to increasing the transparency of the electoral processes through financial monitoring, audit and public reporting of expenditures by electoral authorities and candidates.

Civil Society organisations need to receive continuous support beyond the 2015 local elections in order to increase their ability to push for the implementation of the findings of the election observation reports.

First-time voters awareness raising

From September to October 2014, the Council of Europe in co-operation with the Association for the Independent Press (API) successfully developed and implemented throughout the country a project called "My first vote – civic and electoral education for first-time voters". Activities aimed at encouraging activism and enhancing the degree of young people's involvement in the life of local communities and the entire country. The project target group included young people who reached 18 years of age after the last elections or were to reach 18 prior to the parliamentary elections of 30 November 2014. They were informed about the importance of their vote for the democratic development of the country, the functioning of electoral public structures as foreseen by the law. API worked in partnerships with 13 national and local/regional independent newspapers as well as the largest secondary schools. In the regions, activities were conducted by young journalists from partnering editorial offices and secondary school head teachers. The following activities were conducted:

- 30 topic-based events of civic and electoral education for secondary school pupils in their final year and other young people who were to exercise their vote for the first time;
- a special column called "My first vote" was launched and published for two months in 15 national and local newspapers, in two languages, Romanian and Russian. Relevant information was published about the election process including answers to readers' questions concerning participation in the vote; and
- a webpage www.primulvot.api.md was created and regularly updated with useful information for voters from the country and abroad.

In total 867 young people received the necessary information enabling them to make an informed choice. Electoral education materials were produced and published in 15 Romanian and Russian-language newspapers. Collaboration was ensured with the CEC, the Centre for Human Rights and parliamentary lawyers. Similar activities could be developed for other categories of voters such as the elderly.

Voters' education and awareness raising

The Council of Europe contributed to the development of the CEC campaign for information and education of voters. In this regard, the project contributed to the development of materials on the importance of voting, election procedures and absentee voting. In total 15 audio and video adverts for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova were produced. The adverts have been aired on TV channels and radio stations as well as posted on the CEC website and on social networks such as Facebook and Youtube. The campaign contributed to increasing voter participation in elections and public confidence in the process.

A post-election conference was conducted in March 2015 with over 100 participants. The conclusions of the conference¹ covered such areas as:

- electoral dispute resolution;
- the use of information technology in the electoral process;
- political party and campaign financing;
- gender equality; and
- the role of the media in elections.

Training seminar for proxies on election dispute resolution

On 25-29 May 2015, the Venice Commission organised training sessions on election dispute resolution for proxies, *i.e.* representatives of political parties competing in the 2015 local elections.

Around 80 participants were trained in total, from the whole political spectrum involved in the local elections.

Fight against corruption

Following consultations with national stakeholders and international partners (notably, the EU Delegation to Moldova) conducted from autumn 2014 to spring 2015, the CoE developed a comprehensive proposal to address gaps and deficiencies in the regulatory framework concerning the prevention of and fight against corruption and money laundering and the enhanced capacities of authorities to design and implement corruption prevention measures.

In addition, from 2013-2014 the Republic of Moldova has benefited from participation in the regional programme to review money laundering cases which resulted in development of a training manual on liability of legal persons for corruption offences.

The methodology and organisation based on risk assessments carried out in diverse areas is improved. Further to the completed risk assessments, local integrity plans were designed and put in place with the involvement of civil society organisations in two District Councils (Căușeni and Telenești), based on which a Model Integrity Plan for Moldovan local authorities was drafted. The local authorities were advised to draft their own Integrity Plans, based on the presented model and to implement these documents in their districts, as it is stipulated in the National Anticorruption Strategy 2011-2015. A draft law on political financing was developed through a series of activities with the aim to bring the legislation on political parties in line with the European standards, in particular GRECO recommendations. Furthermore, the new legislation on illicit enrichment and confiscation in line with European standards and directions are provided for its proper implementation, including for the legislation on integrity testing.

LESSONS LEARNED

Local stakeholders' capacity to organise and monitor the electoral process needs further improvement and delivery of the electoral assistance over long period of time will contribute to tackling this problem.

Strengthening relations and co-operation between different stakeholders is an important element of ensuring fairness and transparency of the electoral process. Close co-ordination among donors and partner organisations is necessary.

¹ Available at : http://www.coe.int/t/democracy/electoral-assistance/news/2015/moldova23-24March_en.asp

PROGRAMMING OUTLOOK

Co-operation on electoral matters

The following priority areas will be covered by the CoE activities in the field of elections in 2015-2016:

- organisation of a training session for long-term observers (LTOs) and their assistants and of a workshop for evaluating their activities;
- improving NGOs skills in drafting election observation reports;
- strengthening the capacities of electoral experts charged with the qualitative gathering of data and the drafting and publication of the reports;
- analysis of the institutional capacities of women's organisations, support for the development of institutional capacities in project management, human resources, promotion and visibility;
- support for the regional party organisations to develop recruitment/human resources, promotion and visibility, and project management capacities;
- mentoring programme for young women from political parties who will have access to elected office after the 2015 local elections;
- activities aimed at raising the awareness of all categories of voters, including first-time voters and elderly voters;
- a post-electoral conference will be held in autumn 2015 involving stakeholders including the CEC, CCA, members of political parties, representatives of NGOs, journalists and donor representatives will be invited to discuss the lessons learned from the elections as well as future activities²; and
- strengthening the capacities of the Centre for Continuous Electoral Trainings (CCET) by the CEC.

Moldovan electoral stakeholders will benefit from participation in the CoE regional programmes in the EaP countries. It is envisaged that:

- an online platform for exchange of ideas and resources will be created;
- the coaching/mentoring that had been provided to civil society organisations in the Republic of Moldova will be disseminated in the region; and
- while the context and regulatory frameworks for party and campaign financing differ between countries, issues of advocacy, communications and security are applicable to all organisations in the EaP region will be covered by the CoE activities.

The Venice Commission activities in the field of elections in the Republic of Moldova in 2016:

- a Seminar on Electoral Dispute Resolution for judges;
- an opinion on electoral legislation and/or legislation on political parties.

Fight against corruption

Subject to agreement with authorities, the Council of Europe will provide a targeted intervention to fight corruption in order to:

- align Moldovan legislation to EU law and international instruments concerning passive and active corruption, conflict of interest and money laundering;
- introduce an efficient instrument penalising false asset declarations through asset recovery and banning convicted officials from certain public posts;
- exercise efficient public control over the financing of political parties; and
- institute an effective mechanism of encouraging whistle-blowers and investigative journalists to expose corrupt acts and influence public opinion.

² In the framework of its post-observation procedure (RES 353(2013)REV), the Congress will actively participate in the post-electoral conference.

2. Justice Sector Reform and Independence of the Judiciary

BACKGROUND

The Republic of Moldova undertook commitments to bring its legal and judicial systems in line with common European values, in particular those enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights and other treaties of the Council of Europe to which the Republic of Moldova is a party. The process of aligning the Moldovan legal framework and implementation practices with European standards is monitored closely by the Council of Europe, which is also engaged in providing advice and ensuring co-operation targeting the fulfilment of the said commitments.

The Republic of Moldova is undergoing a process of major changes and reforms in the field of justice. One of the most important milestones in this respect was the adoption in 2011 of the Strategy for Justice Sector Reform (SJSR), an important policy document with the ultimate objective of building an accessible, efficient, independent, transparent, professional justice sector consistent with European standards. The CoE and Moldovan authorities identified the following priorities for the sector:

- to reinforce the guarantees for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the reform of the justice sector related legislation;
- to support the reform of the Public Prosecutor's Service in line with CoE/Venice Commission recommendations;
- to strengthen the efficiency, professionalism and accountability of the judiciary in the Republic of Moldova in the context of the justice sector reform;
- to support the reform of the legal profession through the modernisation of the status of a number of legal professionals working in the justice sector;
- to contribute to the justice sector reform in the Republic of Moldova through a regional approach based on information exchange and best-practice sharing among Eastern Partnership countries;
- to streamline the capacity of the Centre for Human Rights and the Ombudsman institution; and
- to assist authorities in eradication of torture and ill-treatment.

SECTOR IMPACT

The CoE assessment of the draft legislation of the Republic of Moldova has enhanced the capacity of the national stakeholders to ensure the compliance of the legislation with European standards and supported the institutional reform, specifically of the Public Prosecutor's Service.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Supporting the implementation of the Strategy for Justice Sector Reform

The "Organic Law on the Judicial System", "Law on the Status of Judges", the "Law on the National Institute of Justice" and the "Law on the Selection, Performance Appraisal and Career of Judges" and the Law on disciplinary liability of judges were amended, generally following recommendations provided by the CoE.

CoE assistance represented the beginning of a process for establishing qualitative and quantitative evaluation and monitoring and management capacities of the judicial authorities that will ensure that society receives an efficient, timely and well-functioning judicial service. The Supreme Council of Magistrates of the Republic of Moldova increased the number of judges in courts where the 2013 report identified productivity and increased case-loads as issues to be addressed. The Council has worked on the collection of the judicial statistics for the purpose of monitoring and assessment of the work of courts in 2014, which is a new initiative of the Council. The process of consultations and discussion of the amendments to the "Draft Law on Amendment of Certain Laws" and the "Draft Law on Professional Integrity Testing" was also supported. The draft laws developed a number of new provisions which increases the responsibility of the representatives of the judiciary, as well as of other actors in the justice sector and public sector, from an anti-corruption perspective.

Support to Criminal Justice Reforms

The Draft Law on the Public Prosecutor's Service of the Republic of Moldova" (PPS of Moldova) has been revised in light of the recommendations provided in the Joint Opinion of the Venice Commission, the Directorate of Human Rights and the OSCE/ODIHR (CDL-AD(2015)005). It has incorporated three of the five key recommendations defined in the Joint Opinion. These specifically refer to the powers of the PPS outside of criminal law, the mechanism of dismissal of the Prosecutor General and the arrangement of appointing prosecutors in the Gagauzia Autonomous Territorial Unit. It was approved by the Government of the Republic of Moldova, submitted to Parliament and passed the first reading.

In view of the reform of the PPS, the CoE is undertaking the corruption risk-assessment of the PPS of Moldova. The Assessment will be shared with the GRECO secretariat and will contribute to the approaching GRECO's evaluation round.

The capacity building activities aimed at promoting the adoption of the new PPS Law in line with the European standards and raising the prosecutors' and public's awareness about the PPS reform, have been launched. The arrangements for setting up a training-of-trainers network to support further promotion of the new legislation and its practical implementation were agreed between the CoE, the National Institute of Justice, the Public Prosecutor's Service and coordinated with other international partners in the field.

In July 2014, the Moldovan Parliament also adopted the Law on disciplinary liability, previously submitted to the Venice Commission for assessment. Although initial proposals aimed at implementing the recommendations contained in the joint opinion (CDL-AD(2014)006) had been made by the Government, these recommendations were not taken into account by the Parliament when the law was adopted.

LESSONS LEARNED

Sufficient absorption capacities of national partners have to be ensured. It is necessary to avoid "donor congestion" when organising activities that may fall under the same thematic umbrella with other donors and technical assistance providers.

PROGRAMMING OUTLOOK

Supporting the implementation of the Strategy for Justice Sector Reform

In March 2015, an inception mission of the Council of Europe took place in the Republic of Moldova in relation to the joint programme between CoE and EU. The mission aimed to ensure complementarity and constructive co-operation with projects already being implemented. The Superior Council of Magistracy, the Supreme Court of Justice and the Ministry of Justice have confirmed their commitment to implementing the project. The project outline and the adjusted Work Plan have been shared with the donor community.

The activities are designed around the CEPEJ tools, methodology and expertise which represent the result of thorough analysis of judicial systems and exchanges between all 47 member states of the CoE. The CEPEJ tools rely on a strong connection with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, European standards for justice and the traditions of European judicial systems.

Six pilot courts were selected to proceed with the pilot implementation of the CEPEJ guidelines and tools; and focal points and contact persons have been appointed in each beneficiary institution. Following 2 CEPEJ expert missions the implementation of the court coaching programme has started in 6 courts. The programme will assess the work of the courts and provide advice on improving time and quality management.

Support to Criminal Justice Reforms

At the beginning of 2015, the CoE started implementing a project supporting the authorities in fulfilling country's outstanding statutory and accession commitments towards the Council of Europe in the field of criminal justice.

The project, which was officially launched on 15 July 2015 provides for enhancement of the Republic of Moldova's capacity to comply with European standards in the criminal justice sector and support to the institutional reform of the Public Prosecutor's Service, development of institutional capacity to implement the mandates of the Ombudsman and the National Preventive Mechanism, and support to development of capacity to prevent and ensure remedial action in cases of ill-treatment.

The work plan of the Project was approved at the Project's first steering committee and the authorities' commitments towards constructive cooperation in the framework of the Project were re-affirmed.

Support to lawyers' profession

The holistic and transversal approach adopted by the CoE brings an added value to this intervention. A needs assessment was completed in March in order to assess the supervisory functions of the Moldovan Bar Association (MBA) and to submit proposals for improving them in compliance with European standards and best practices. As a result, the work plan has been finalised and discussed with national and international partners. The CoE is supporting the Union of Lawyers on management, ethics and discipline, continuous training of lawyers and clients' personal data protection. The CoE will support the government with expertise on draft amendments to the "Law on the Bar", which are now under preparation. Following 2 expert missions in 2015, a road map was developed in close consultations with the MBA management. It aims to increase legislative compliance and strengthen institutional capacity of the MBA. The road map covers such areas as self-governance and management of the MBA, the lawyers' ethics and discipline, their continuous training programme and client data protection.

Strengthening the Probation Service

Strengthening the Probation Service in the Republic of Moldova is one of the priorities of the SJSR and its Action Plan, adopted by the Moldovan Government. In this framework a number of improvements are being planned. Through the implementation of a project, the Council of Europe will provide support for a further strengthening of the Moldovan Probation Service by integrating the Council of Europe standards in the system. The CoE intervention in this field aims at:

- promoting alternatives to pre-trial detention by amending relevant legislation and providing training for judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials on amended/new legislation;
- extending the scope of community sanctions and measures and developing a system of conditional release and parole; and
- further improving probation supervision and its reintegration role in order to effectively re-socialise offenders thus reducing re-offending.

In order to implement a modern probation system, in the period of 2013-2015, with the support of the CoE, the Probation Office under the Ministry of Justice has organized several activities which aimed to contribute to the strengthening of the probation system, development of the policies on community safety through effective rehabilitation of offenders.

3. Protection and Promotion of Human Rights

BACKGROUND

The Strategy for Justice Sector Reform requires the impact assessment of the current regulatory framework on the execution of decisions and of the mechanism for implementing these decisions (including the ECtHR's judgments) and the improvement of the existing criminal legislation as to the removal of inconsistencies between this and the standards of protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Since its adoption a large number of activities have taken place in the implementation of the Strategy with assistance from the Council of Europe. The CoE contributed significantly to the improvement of the national legislation referring to execution of ECtHR judgments and securing human rights in the pre-trial phase of the criminal procedures through assistance to the legal assessment of the "Draft Law on the Government Agent" and the "Draft Law to amend the Criminal Procedure Code".

The Action Plan activities contributed to implementation of the following objectives in this sector:

- to enhance the national implementation of the ECHR in the Republic of Moldova;
- to ensure widespread awareness and use of the HELP training resources among legal professionals in the Republic of Moldova, through the increase of the Programme's visibility;
- to reinforce national capacities for combating ill-treatment by law enforcement agencies and penitentiary institutions, including strengthening the effectiveness of prevention, documentation and investigations of allegations of ill-treatment;
- to strengthen the role of the Ombudsman institution in the protection and promotion of human rights in the Republic of Moldova;
- to support and reinforce the national efforts for combatting discrimination and promoting diversity in society; and
- to enhance the institutional capacities for effective implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan, with particular regard to the human rights of Roma.

SECTOR IMPACT

As a result of the CoE interventions, a favourable environment has been created for the harmonised application of the ECHR standards by the judiciary in the Republic of Moldova. The procedural guarantees required under the ECHR and ECtHR case law in criminal procedures have been consolidated. The deficiencies of the criminal procedure or of the mechanism for its implementation, highlighted by the ECtHR, were addressed by the "Draft Law to amend the Criminal Procedure Code". Legislative improvements were aimed at bringing the definition of torture in line with international standards, tightening sanctions, eliminating the possibility to grant amnesty or apply milder sanctions, as well as reinforcing the procedural guarantees for detained individuals. Since 2013, a significant decrease in the complaints by detainees has been observed, showing diminished impunity, an improved discipline of prison staff and respect for the rights of prisoners. The statistics of 2013-2014 indicate a positive trend in sentencing perpetrators of ill-treatment. Moldovan and Ukrainian national ECHR trainers, previously trained by the CoE, have trained their peers in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Discussion on the role of judges in eradicating ill-treatment and impunity was furthered at an international conference, hosted in Chisinau and organised at the highest level. These actions contributed to developing a regional network of experts thus enhancing information exchange and creating an environment conducive to zero tolerance towards ill-treatment in the region.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Support to a coherent implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights

Since March 2014, the CoE has focused its interventions in the field of protection and promotion of human rights on addressing the major issues and shortcomings in the Moldovan national judicial system that prevent the proper application and implementation of ECHR standards. In particular, the CoE assisted the authorities to remove the discrepancies between the national legislation – especially criminal law – and the ECHR and to increase the capacity of Moldovan courts with regard to interpretation and uniform application of the ECHR and the case law of the ECtHR. The "Draft Law on Government Agent" and the "Draft Law to amend the Criminal Procedure Code" have been assessed by the CoE as to their compliance with ECHR standards and European best practices at the request of the Ministry of Justice. The findings and recommendations of the assessment reports were discussed with the representatives of the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Justice subsequently informed the project team that the majority of recommendations had been taken into account and the draft text was changed accordingly. In January 2015, the draft laws were submitted to the government for a subsequent approval and submission to parliament. Law no.151 on the Government Agent" was adopted by the Parliament on 30 July 2015 and entered into force on 21 August 2015. The "Draft Law to amend the Criminal Procedure Code" was approved by the Government on 21 August 2015 after additional legal drafting procedures and was sent to the Parliament. The legislative debates are pending before the Parliament and the outcome cannot be anticipated nor the time of its adoption envisaged.

Human rights capacity building activities implemented in the reporting period included a comprehensive training-of-trainers (ToT) programme on the ECHR for the trainers of National Institute of Justice (NIJ), training seminars for staff of the Ombudsman Institution and Constitutional Court, study visits to Strasbourg for judges and prosecutors and for the staff of the Ombudsman Institution. In total, 526 legal professionals benefitted from the cascade training seminars. All the activities have been organised by taking into consideration the training needs of the beneficiaries by consulting partner institutions. Given the variety of training activities for legal professionals carried out in the Republic of Moldova by other international actors (e.g. the Norwegian Mission of rule of law advisers to the Republic of Moldova, the National Institute of Justice and American Bar Association), the CoE will continue to ensure close co-ordination with these actors.

In addition, the Council of Europe experts have developed proposals for effective preventive and compensatory remedies based on the ECHR case law and other countries' experiences. The experts' report fed into the action plan submitted by the Republic of Moldova to the Committee of Ministers in October 2013. In December 2013 the Committee of Ministers welcomed the Moldovan Supreme Court's Explanatory Decision on a compensatory remedy, although it does not yet fully comply with ECHR requirements. A working group was set up by the Minister of Justice to come up with concrete proposals for reforms of the criminal justice system and the modalities of the domestic remedies. It is expected that the reform package will be submitted to the cabinet of the government in December 2015.

Strengthening the role of the Ombudsman institution in the protection and promotion of human rights in the Republic of Moldova

Within the framework of the project "Support to criminal justice reforms in the Republic of Moldova", the CoE is assessing the legal framework of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) provided by the Law on People's Advocate (Ombudsperson) of the Republic of Moldova. According to the agreement with the Venice Commission, it will complement the Venice Commission's Opinion on the Law of People's Advocate of the Republic of Moldova, issued in June 2015. Furthermore, the CoE is undertaking an in-depth needs assessment with a view to ensuring a set-up and efficient functioning of the NPM of Moldova under the new legal framework.

Fight against ill-treatment and impunity

In March 2014, a regional joint project with EU "Reinforcing the fight against ill-treatment and impunity" was successfully completed. It helped to develop the capacity of the concerned national actors – law enforcement, legal professionals and civil society – to prevent and combat ill-treatment and promote effective investigations. The recommendations of the leading experts in the field were provided, regional networking of professionals was facilitated, best practices were assessed and shared.

A follow-up CoE's assistance aimed at ensuring prevention and remedial action in cases of ill-treatment are provided to the Moldovan authorities through the project "Support to criminal justice reforms in the Republic of Moldova". The Project also translated the manual for health-care workers and other prison staff with responsibility for prisoners' well-being and will be publish it in Romanian.

European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP)

The main achievement of the HELP programme in the Republic of Moldova in 2015 was the adaptation of the HELP curriculum for the "Introduction to the ECHR and the ECtHR" to the Moldovan legal system (and translation into the national language). The National Institute for Justice (NIJ) is currently testing the revised curriculum on a pilot group of judges in autumn 2015 and then integrate it into its continuous education programme. The same was done with the HELP course on preventing discrimination.

In September 2015, a first distance-learning course for judges and prosecutors in the framework of the Council of Europe HELP Programme was launched in co-operation with National Institute of Justice. The official introduction of the HELP Programme in the Republic of Moldova will take place during the High-level Conference on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Moldovan membership to the Council of Europe on 4-5 November 2015.

In July 2015, the CoE completed a regional Project on strengthening the capacity for domestic application of the ECHR and the RESC by lawyers and human rights defenders. The Project specifically strengthened the capacities of over 800 legal professionals vis-à-vis the application of anti-discrimination standards established by the ECHR and the case-law of the ECtHR. The CoE also made available a specific HELP course on anti-discrimination in Romanian and a number of other information and training materials. Most importantly, the Project built a pool of trainers capable of training legal professionals on this subject.

Prevention and elimination of discrimination

On 30 September 2014, ECRI, together with the Moldovan Ministry of Justice and the Moldovan “Council on the prevention and elimination of discrimination and ensuring equality”, held a round-table at Chisinau on the implementation of the recommendations of its fourth monitoring report.

In the first semester 2016, ECRI will publish its conclusions on the implementation of the three interim follow-up recommendations it has made in its 4th report on the Republic of Moldova. The topic of equal access of women to justice has been included in the curricula of the further training for judges provided by the National Institute of Justice of the Republic of Moldova for 2016.

Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues

In preparation of the 5th European Romani Women’s Conference (Skopje, October 2015), the SRSG for Roma Issues organised in Chisinau a meeting on the empowerment of Romani women. In June 2015, a seminar was held in Chisinau to train lawyers on preventing discrimination against Roma.

LESSONS LEARNED

The CoE’s expertise, its focus on European human rights standards is a necessary complement to the actions of other actors aimed at the enhancement of human rights protection in the Republic of Moldova.

PROGRAMMING OUTLOOK

Support to coherent implementation of the European Convention of Human Rights

The CoE will continue to assist the Moldovan authorities in developing and implementing distance-learning courses for judges and prosecutors. Training seminars for the Constitutional Court and the Centre for Human Rights will continue on the mutually agreed topics.

Strengthening the role of the Ombudsman institution in the protection and promotion of human rights in the Republic of Moldova

Within the framework of the project “Support to criminal justice reforms in the Republic of Moldova”, which was officially launched in July, 2015, the Council of Europe will continue to provide assistance in the development of institutional capacity to implement the mandates of the Ombudsman and the National Preventive Mechanism.

Fight against ill-treatment and impunity

Under the “Support to criminal justice reforms in the Republic of Moldova”, the Council of Europe will continue to assist the Moldovan authorities in strengthening their further capacity development and supporting actions aimed at preventing and ensuring remedial action in cases of ill-treatment.

European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP)

The implementation of the course on “Introduction to the ECHR” started in September 2015 with a first pilot group of judges. Additionally a similar course has been launched for a group of Moldovan lawyers. HELP resources will also be used in the framework of other projects, such as the Criminal Justice Reform.

Supporting national efforts for prevention and combatting discrimination

In July 2015, the CoE started implementation of activities aimed at aligning national legislation on non-discrimination with the European standards. As a result of the intervention, the national regulatory framework and practice in the field of protection of social rights will be aligned with the provisions of the European Social Charter and the principles of the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the 50th anniversary of the European Social Charter. Moreover, as of July 2015 the CoE started a Project specifically aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Council for Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality to implement effectively its preventive, monitoring and remedial functions in regard to discrimination on all grounds.

Reinforcing the fight against trafficking in human beings

GRETA's evaluation report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Republic of Moldova was made publicly available on 22 February 2012. The report formulated a number of recommendations on strengthening certain aspects of the anti-trafficking system, which laid the basis for the National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan of the Republic of Moldova 2012-2013 and are further considered in the National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan 2014-2015, currently under implementation. The Government of the Republic of Moldova has set up a Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The Ministry of Interior reform has reinforced the Centre for Combating Trafficking in Persons as a specialised law enforcement unit tasked with conducting criminal investigations, the identification of victims of this crime as well as data collection and international co-operation on matters related to THB crimes. The Border Police department has been mandated with criminal investigations on trans-border crimes, including human trafficking and people smuggling.

While the country's efforts concerning the development of anti-trafficking legislation and institutional framework have been positively assessed by GRETA, there is a continuous need to ensure that the relevant institutions are properly equipped and skilled to perform their functions, address new challenges related to THB crimes and secure victims protection and access to justice.

Data protection

In spring 2015, the CoE has started preparation of an expert report and recommendations on implementation of the Republic of Moldova's Digital Agenda in line with CoE adopted standards on the internet and human rights. A needs assessment visit took place in March 2015. The CoE has consulted the government representative in preparation for the annual conference of the 26-country coalition to promote internet freedom which took place in Mongolia in May 2015.

Children rights

In 2012, the Republic of Moldova ratified the CoE Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention). Following the ratification of the Convention, Moldovan authorities have made numerous legal reforms to strengthen child protection against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. At the request of the Moldovan authorities the CoE conducted a needs assessment to identify efficient measures to implement the provisions of the Lanzarote Convention relating to the creation of child-friendly structures to support victims of sexual violence. As a result the CoE developed a coherent proposal to assist authorities in improving relevant procedures, develop continuity of services and enhance relevant infrastructures to support children victims of sexual violence. There is a need for enhanced co-ordination of efforts by different agencies, civil society and international partners working in the Republic of Moldova. Many issues arise as a result of the unpredictability of funding, partially attributable to lack of donor co-ordination. On the basis of the outcome of the 1st Report of the Lanzarote Committee (expected to be issued in December 2015), the CoE proposals on addressing policy and practical issues of children protection in the Republic of Moldova maybe included in the new co-operation document between the CoE and relevant authorities following further negotiations.

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML)

When acceding to the Council of Europe in 1995, the Republic of Moldova committed itself to signing and ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) by 13 July 1996. The Republic of Moldova signed the ECRML in 2002 but has not yet ratified it. In 2012, the Moldovan working group on ratification of the ECRML prepared a draft ratification instrument with the support of the Council of Europe. This document contains the undertakings that were selected from the Charter to apply to the minority languages in the Republic of Moldova. The choice of undertakings was made on the basis of the existing legislation and practice in the Republic of Moldova. Some of the undertakings concern local and regional authorities. However, the Republic of Moldova has not yet submitted the draft ratification instrument to parliament due to additional practical steps that need to be undertaken.

In order to prepare the ratification and implementation of the ECRML, the application of ECRML provisions could be simulated in pilot municipalities, according to the Government endorsement. The legal and practical assistance to the pilot municipalities identified by the Government, in applying the Charter could become part of the future capacity building and technical co-operation between the CoE and Moldovan authorities.

"One in Five" Campaign and the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

The CoE will contribute to organisation of the regional conference on the Istanbul Convention in Chisinau in November 2015.

4. Freedom and Pluralism of the Media

BACKGROUND

According to the 2014 report of Reporters Without Borders, Moldova's mass media enjoy a significant degree of pluralism and relatively little state censorship. The survey titled "Media Freedom Index of the Eastern Partnership countries" covering the first half of 2014 concluded that the Republic of Moldova has the second highest degree of media freedom among the Eastern Partnership countries.

Despite progress, worrying trends affected media freedom in the Republic of Moldova. In its Final Statement and Recommendations of 25 March 2014, the EU-Republic of Moldova Parliamentary Co-operation Committee once again encouraged the Moldovan Government to engage in new reforms to the media sector, in particular with regards to the broadcasting code and public broadcasting, and recommended, in this regard, to tackle the issue of transparency of the ownership of radio stations and television channels and to continue to ensure the neutrality of public broadcasting, which are both of critical importance.

The beginning of 2015 was marked by the eagerness of newly-elected Members of Parliament to amend the Broadcasting Code of the Republic of Moldova. Three bills have been proposed by the MPs aiming, to ensure a safe informational environment in the Republic of Moldova and to promote domestic TV and radio productions. The legislative initiatives raised strong criticism from media watchdogs and journalists, with MPs being accused of violating European media standards. On other hand, the slow digital switchover process, low public awareness about changes related to the digitalisation and conflicting legal regulations are among the biggest challenges to media freedom that need to be dealt with urgently in the Republic of Moldova.

PROGRAMMING OUTLOOK

The CoE programme to promote media freedom and pluralism in the Republic of Moldova is designed on the basis of the findings of the assessment meetings on Council of Europe media assistance in the Republic of Moldova held in September-October 2014 and on the basis of the work done within the framework of the now-completed EU/CoE joint "Democracy Support Programme" and the regional EU/CoE joint programme "Promoting freedom, professionalism and pluralism of media in the South Caucasus and the Republic of Moldova". The proposed activities will contribute to the improvement of the regulatory framework related to media pluralism in line with the Council of Europe standards and will raise public awareness of the effects of the transition from analogue to digital TV broadcasting. Also, the project will provide assistance to public broadcasters and their governing bodies in order to enhance the independence, transparency and professionalism of the public service broadcasters in the Republic of Moldova, as well as to ensure content diversification and access of general public to unbiased, trustworthy and accurate information from public broadcasters.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

In July 2015, the CoE prepared an opinion on the Draft Law supplementing the Audiovisual Code of the Republic of Moldova and the Draft Law amending and supplementing the Audiovisual Code of the Republic of Moldova on the basis of an independent expert assessment. In September 2015, the authors of the drafts, during public hearings organised by the Parliament with participation of civil society and local broadcasters, agreed to consider the expert's recommendations in the process of revising the Audiovisual Code of the Republic of Moldova.

In August 2015, the CoE prepared an opinion on the Draft Regulation on the Procedure and Stipulations for the Issuing of Digital Broadcasting Licences and Digital Retransmission Permits for the Use of Multiplexes on the basis of the independent expert assessment. The Expert Opinion addressed three main issues that the draft Regulation raises: the economic conditions of the digital switchover; the procedure that will be implemented by the CCA for the issuance of the licences and permits; the criteria that will be used by the CCA to decide between the tenderers.

5. Local Democracy and Decentralisation

BACKGROUND

In response to the Government of the Republic of Moldova's request to support the local democracy reform the CoE accompanies the reform process, building on its *acquis* and know-how in the field. In April 2012, the Parliament has adopted the National Decentralisation Strategy (NDS). The adoption of the Strategy followed Congress Recommendation 322 (2012). The decentralisation reform is in need of assistance in the following areas: territorial re-organisation, the clear assignment of responsibilities to local government administration and local government finances. The CoE Best Practice Programme identifies, celebrates and disseminates best practices of Moldovan local authorities in three different fields each year. Many municipalities take inspiration from this competition and many of the practices awarded by the Programme have been replicated by others. The Programme has become one of the best-known capacity building projects for Moldovan municipalities and is strongly supported by the State Chancellery.

The activities in the reporting period aimed to support the Moldovan authorities in establishing an efficient decentralised local government system through the effective implementation of the National Decentralisation Strategy and the National Strategy for Regional Development.

SECTOR IMPACT

Over the duration of the Best Practice Programme over 300 municipalities applied and 44 were awarded. Several TV documentaries were produced. Each year sees the increased number of participants which allows dissemination of the best practices all around the country.

The CoE has provided recommendations on the draft law on the status of Chisinau which is now pending adoption by the Parliament. .

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

In 2013, 50 applications to participate in Best Practice Programme of the CoE were received from 39 municipalities, in 2014 56 applications from 41 municipalities (including one from Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova) and in 2015, there were 76 entries from 49 municipalities.

The CoE has conducted an impact analysis of the various scenarios for the administration of Chisinau and advised on a new "Draft Law on the Status of Chisinau" whose adoption was postponed after the elections. It also advised on the drafting and revision of the Registry of Municipal Competencies. Its adoption is pending.

In July 2014, the Congress organised in co-operation with national authority a high level meeting which comprised visits in Transnistrian region and in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia. A joint agreement was found to launch a post-monitoring process.

In July 2015, the post-monitoring visit took place in Chisinau. The post-monitoring units included exchanges of views on the Congress Recommendation 322 (2012), including:

- the adoption and implementation of a National Strategy for Decentralisation,
- dialogue between central authorities and the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia,
- the clarification of competences between national and local levels,
- the status of Chisinau,
- the signature of the Additional Protocol on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority (CETS n°207).

The post-monitoring delegation is confident that the roadmap (currently in progress) will be successfully discussed with national authorities in a near future (probably beginning 2016).

The Council of Europe has contributed to the process of the drafting the “Law on the Public Prosecutor’s Service Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (ATU)”. The law passed its first reading in May 2015; the second reading is expected in autumn 2015.

LESSONS LEARNED

The State Chancellery is in need of continued capacity development to effectively deal with local government reform.

PROGRAMMING OUTLOOK

No further legal support is currently envisaged until there is a degree of political stability conducive to the adoption of legislation under review.

Following consultations with national authorities and ATU stakeholders, a series of activities were prepared in order to increase the capacity of the legal departments of the People’s Assembly and of the Executive Committee of the ATU to prepare opinions on the draft laws that are submitted to them for consultation and to prepare legislative initiatives.

The joint EU/CoE programme “Community-led Urban Strategies in Historic Towns” was launched on 1st January 2015. The project implemented in the pilot town of Soroca is aiming at exploring and testing urban planning models which respond to the practical problems in small and medium-sized historic towns. The project is currently carried out in parallel in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine, and it should end on 30 June 2017.

6. Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) Programme for the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova

BACKGROUND

Since 2010, the Council of Europe has been implementing a number of actions concerning confidence building measures (CBMs) across the River Nistru/Dniester in full consultation with the Moldovan authorities and interlocutors in Tiraspol. The CoE CBMs Programme is based on the idea that confidence building can contribute to establishing a socio-political environment that is conducive to peace-making. Moreover, the confidence building has better chance to succeed when people-to-people contacts take place including cross-river interaction between authorities at different levels, professional groups and the general public. The CBMs Programme aims also at increasing awareness of European and international human rights standards in the region.

The technical fields identified for confidence building co-operation include:

- building partnership between the radio journalists from both banks of the Nistru/Dniester;
- capacity building training seminars addressed to NGOs and local public authorities;
- treatment of inmates suffering from transmissible diseases in places of detention and improving the situation of people with disabilities, particularly children, through greater use of deinstitutionalisation and inclusive education; and
- the application of social rights in the region in line with the standards of European Social Charter and other international instruments.

The CoE programme relied on co-operation both with governmental institutions in Chisinau and the leaders in Tiraspol, as well as local NGOs, identified because of their specific experience and previous co-operation record with the CoE. Equality, transparency and dialogue are the three principles on which the implementation of CBMs was based.

SECTOR IMPACT

The CoE CBM Programme contributed to increased people-to-people contact. All four components reached significant number of people and established or reinforced cross-river contacts. People-to-people exchanges resulted in increased openness to cross-river interaction:

- In the period June 2014-May 2015, 12 monthly joint radio programmes were aired simultaneously by the radio stations from both banks of Nistru/Dniester: Radio Moldova (Chisinau) and Radio 1 (Tiraspol). The programme is also aired on the websites of the radio stations: www.trm.md/ro/actualitati-online (Chisinau) and <http://radio.pgtrk.ru> (Tiraspol). Although it is not easy to estimate the exact audience of the joint radio programme, according to audience research carried out in 2012 by IMAS³, approximately 400,000 citizens of the Republic of Moldova listen to Radio Moldova. In Tiraspol no audience research is conducted.
- A total of 40 media professionals from both banks of the Nistru/Dniester river and from both “state-owned” and independent media outlets were involved under the media component of the CBM programme.
- The NGO Resource Centre “Partnership and Solidarity Fund” was set up by the CoE in Tiraspol in July 2014. It provides technical, informational and capacity building support to the Transnistrian NGOs.
- 20 NGOs from both banks benefited from the capacity building activities and many NGOs and individuals were reached through the activities of the NGO Resource Centre “Partnership and Solidarity Fund”.
- As a result of the CoE programme, representatives of the prison administration from the penitentiary sectors from both banks of the river met for the first time since the war in the early 1990s. The professionals had a truly unique opportunity to meet each other and discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. In July 2014, the Transnistrian penitentiary department initiated co-operation with Chisinau to precipitate diagnosis and treatment of TB patients in the Transnistrian prisons. Project recommendations were instrumental in securing Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria funding for quality anti-TB drugs in the penitentiary institutions on both banks during 2015-2017. This was particularly important for the Transnistrian region, which had not greatly benefitted from Global Fund support in the past.
- A total of 30 social care workers from both banks of the River Nistru/Dniester received in-depth training on the provision of social care to people with disabilities using the European Care Certificate (ECC) and the human rights based approach to disability. Six participants received ECC certificates which allow practicing social care according to European standards.

In addition to the above exchanges, a number of activities in the fields of education, culture and sports were carried out through the Ordinary Budget of the Council of Europe.

The CoE CBMs Programme ensured the support for its activities through an all-inclusive approach that was initiated at the technical level with relevant line authorities, partners and local NGOs on both banks of the River Nistru/Dniester. The programme is seen by both sides as a neutral framework that focuses on resolution of technical issues at the professional level. It must be noted that at the moment the Council of Europe, through the implementation of its CBMs Programme, is the only international organisation with regular and unhindered access to the Transnistrian region that maintains constructive working relations with authorities in the penitentiary and social sectors in Chisinau and Tiraspol.

The Moldovan authorities have been fully committed to CBMs for several years. The necessary structures and budget lines have been put in place at national level to support CBMs and make the results sustainable. Since the change in leadership in Tiraspol in 2012, the leadership in Tiraspol has shown considerable willingness to benefit from CBMs and encourage participation among the relevant groups of potential participants. Regular contacts are maintained with the CBMs project team to ensure activities address beneficiaries’ needs.

³ IMAS is one of the largest public opinion and market research agencies in Romania. The Institute was set up at the beginning of 1992.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

In 2014, the Council of Europe built a strong foundation for a long-term partnership between the radio journalists from both banks of the Nistru/Dniester. In the period June 2014 - May 2015 a total of 12 joint radio programmes were produced. Twenty young journalists from both sides of the river Nistru/Dniester have attended workshops on multimedia storytelling skills, best practices in multimedia storytelling and developed their storytelling skills in production of multimedia stories. The stories produced by joint teams of journalists during the training seminars were published on workshop's website: <https://multimoldova.wordpress.com>

Through the CoE grant, an NGO Resource Centre "Partnership and Solidarity Fund" was set up in Tiraspol and started its activities in July 2014. It provides technical, informational and capacity building support to the Transnistrian NGOs. The Centre provides adapted and specialised training seminars and consultations mainly to NGOs working in the social sphere. It offers space free of charge and provides access to five fully equipped workstations with free access to the internet. The NGO "Workshop of Solutions" from Riga (Latvia) was selected for the provision of four capacity building seminars on management, communication, project planning and development and fundraising. In addition, online consultations and mentoring from the team of international experts were organised for the development of the joint project proposals. As a result of the training 6 project proposals were developed and 3 were selected for funding. The projects focus on social and financial education for young people, training for young journalists on writing about the rights of people with disabilities and making the voice of people with disabilities heard.

Recommendations on methods and standards of prevention and treatment of TB and HIV/AIDS in places of detention were presented to the authorities on both sides of the river. The recommendations were used successfully in obtaining funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for 2015-2017 for both sides of the river. This funding will help to implement recommendations and thus improve compliance with CPT standards. Training sessions and study visits organised for healthcare professions working in penitentiary system in Chisinau and Tiraspol helped to gain knowledge and skills to improve healthcare for the inmates and raise awareness about best practices and European standards in this field.

A social care training activity using the European Care Certificate and human rights based approach to disability was organised for 30 social care workers from both banks of the river Nistru/Dniester. It aimed at improving the skills of social workers and specialists who provide care to people with disabilities and increase their awareness of the social model of disability. The methodology of the training was based on the human rights approach to disability and followed the principles of the European set of the Basic Social Care Learning Outcomes (BESCLO), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan. Six participants successfully passed the test and received European Care Certificate certificates.

LESSONS LEARNED

The CBMs Programmes built confidence between participants from the two banks. The methodology used was based on equal involvement and participation in the decision-making process for participants from both banks. This contributed to create a constructive environment for the implementation of projects.

Focus on target groups previously not covered by CBMs (such as media and staff of penitentiary institutions), created added value in the CBM landscape on both sides of the river.

As there are other projects currently active in the area of civil society in the Republic of Moldova, the Council of Europe project staff actively co-ordinated with other international donors in order to avoid overlapping and ensure the necessary complementarity.

CBMs create an environment conducive to the peace-building process by developing and strengthening existent links between people from both sides of the river. Intensified contacts between media professionals and civil society help to attack prejudices.

The sustainability of the CBMs greatly depends on the benefits that the programme brings to all parties involved therefore continuity of the CoE CBM programmes is necessary.

There is a need for adequate linguistic support of the programmes to ensure that both sides receive high-quality materials and training in their language. In addition, cultural sensitivity in the activities is an important factor in achieving sustainable results.

PROGRAMMING OUTLOOK

The CoE will continue to support the dialogue between professionals, civil society, media, prison staff, local authorities and human rights actors from both banks of the river Nistru/Dniester. The technical fields identified for co-operation in 2016-2018 are media, human rights in places of detention, human rights of persons with disabilities and social human rights of young adults from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Specifically, the CoE is considering CBM activities in the following fields:

- further strengthening the existing partnerships between media professionals and further promote the human rights approach to journalism on both banks of the river Nistru/Dniester;
- contributing to effective prevention, proper diagnosis, and treatment of TB and HIV/AIDS in prisons;
- facilitating the advocacy and enabling the decision-makers at national and local levels to proceed with the implementation of human rights tools in the social field, notably through adequate institutional framework for persons with disabilities; and
- supporting effective measures on access to social rights for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, in line with the principles of the Council of Europe instruments, in particular the European Social Charter.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PROJECTS

I. Ongoing country-specific projects

AP Objective/ Reference	Logframe	Project title
1.2 Co-operation on electoral matters	<u>VC 3112</u> <u>JP 3228</u> <u>JP 3231</u> <u>VC 3054</u>	Capacity building of the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training of the Republic of Moldova Co-operation on electoral matters in the Republic of Moldova Co-operation on electoral matters in the Republic of Moldova Electoral assistance
2.1 Supporting the implementation of the Strategy for Justice Sector Reform (criminal justice reforms area) 3.4 Assistance to the Ombudsman Institution – The People’s Advocate Office 3.7 Combatting ill-treatment and impunity	<u>VC 3192</u>	Support to criminal justice reforms in the Republic of Moldova
2.2 Strengthening the efficiency, professionalism and accountability of the judiciary	<u>JP 3195</u>	Strengthening the efficiency of justice and support to lawyers’ profession in the Republic of Moldova
3.5 Supporting national efforts for prevention and combatting discrimination in the Republic of Moldova	<u>JP 3238</u>	Strengthening the capacities of the Council on Prevention and Combatting Discrimination
4.2 Strengthening the respect for human rights in the implementation of the Republic of Moldova’s Digital Agenda	<u>JP 3269</u>	Strengthening the respect for human rights in the implementation of the Republic of Moldova’s Digital Agenda

II. Ongoing regional projects

AP Objective/ Reference	Logframe	Project title
3.1 Enhancing coherent national implementation of the European Convention of Human Rights	<u>VC 3015</u>	Support to a coherent national implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights in the Republic of Moldova

III. Completed projects

AP Objective/ Reference	Logframe	Project title
1.3 Fight against corruption	<u>JP 2524</u>	Good governance and the fight against corruption in the Eastern Partnership countries
2.2 Strengthening the efficiency, professionalism and accountability of the judiciary	<u>JP 2632</u>	Enhancing judicial reform in the Eastern Partnership countries
3.1 Enhancing coherent national implementation of the European Convention of Human Rights	<u>VC 3001</u>	Strengthening professional training on the European Convention on Human Rights – European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (the HELP Programme)
3.2 Strengthening lawyers' capacity for domestic application of the European Convention on Human Rights and of the Revised European Social Charter (RESC)	<u>JP 2849</u>	Strengthening lawyers' capacity for domestic application of the European Convention on Human Rights and of the Revised European Social Charter (RESC)
3.3 Execution of the ECtHR judgments in the field of detention on remand and remedies to challenge detention conditions	<u>VC 2748</u>	Implementing pilot, quasi-pilot judgments and judgments revealing structural problems in the field of detention on remand and effective remedies to challenge conditions of detention
3.7 Combatting ill-treatment and impunity	<u>JP 2628</u>	Reinforcing the fight against ill-treatment and impunity
6. Confidence-Building Measures across the River Nistru/Dniester	<u>VC 2985</u> <u>VC 2536</u>	Human Rights Approach to Confidence Building Measures in the Transnistria Region of the Republic of Moldova

IV. Projects not yet implemented

AP Objective/ Reference	Project title
1.3 Fight against corruption*	Controlling corruption through law-enforcement and upgraded prevention
3.6 Strengthening institutional capacities for the implementation of National Human Rights Action Plan, with particular regard to the human rights of Roma	Strengthening institutional capacities for the implementation of National Human Rights Action Plan, with particular regard to the human rights of Roma
3.7 Combatting ill-treatment and impunity	Strengthening the Probation Service in the Republic of Moldova

3.8 Reinforcing the fight against trafficking in human beings in line with GRETA recommendations	Reinforcing the fight against trafficking in human beings in line with GRETA recommendations
4.1 Promoting media freedom and pluralism*	Promoting media freedom and pluralism in the Republic of Moldova
5.1 Supporting the implementation of the National Decentralisation Strategy and the National Strategy for Regional Development	Support for the implementation of the National Decentralisation Strategy in the Republic of Moldova
5.2 Strengthening local government through decentralisation and capacity building	Strengthening local democracy and governance in the Republic of Moldova
6. Confidence-Building Measures across the River Nistru/Dniester	Follow-up project

* Advanced stage of discussions for support with the European Union

APPENDIX II

SUMMARY TABLE – COMPLETED PROJECTS

Project	Objective	Outcome
CHAPTER 1. Functioning Democratic Institutions and Good Governance		
Good governance and the fight against corruption in the Eastern Partnership countries Ref. JP 2524 Duration: January 2011 - December 2014	To enhance good governance and strengthen the capacities of the public administration and criminal justice sector in order to effectively prevent and fight corruption in line with the Council of Europe Conventions and other international treaties.	The quality of anti-corruption action plans, the mechanisms of their monitoring as well as the quality of draft laws were improved and a large audience of public officials and civil society representatives was trained on good practices of designing and implementing anti-corruption policies. These creates an enabling environment conducive to the achievement of the goals of the anti-corruption policies.
CHAPTER 2. Justice Sector Reform and Independence of the Judiciary		
Enhancing judicial reform in the Eastern Partnership countries Ref. JP 2632 Duration: January 2011 - December 2014	To support and enhance the ongoing process of reform of the judiciary with a view to increasing the independence, efficiency, transparency, accountability and accessibility of the judicial systems of the participating beneficiary countries, through intensive information exchange and best practice sharing.	The main shortcomings as regards the compatibility of domestic legislation and practice with relevant European standards concerning independence, professionalism and efficiency of judiciary were identified and country specific recommendations were provided on the necessary steps to be taken. This puts a basis for further reforms of the justice sector aimed at increasing independence, efficiency, transparency, accountability and accessibility of the judicial system. A network of experts in the Eastern Partnership countries was set up which is able to provide applicable, complete and timely information that may help to enhance judicial reform processes in the region.
CHAPTER 3. Protection and Promotion of Human Rights		
European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (the HELP Programme) Ref. VC 3001 Duration: March 2013 - February 2014	To support member states in implementing the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) at the national level, in accordance with the 2012 Brighton Declaration, by enhancing judges, prosecutors and lawyers' capacity to apply the ECHR in their daily work.	National training institutions' (NTIs) are equipped to provide all necessary information and training on ECHR, using HELP methodology and resources. Judges, prosecutors and lawyers were trained on the use of HELP methodology and resources. Further ECHR materials and tools are developed, updated and disseminated, for e-learning, training purposes and self-learning, raising the level of knowledge of the ECHR among judges and prosecutors. An e-learning course on anti-discrimination issues has been developed and launched. Thus, the judges, prosecutors and lawyers' capacity to apply the ECHR in their daily work has increased.

<p>Strengthening lawyers' capacity for domestic application of the European Convention on Human Rights and of the Revised European Social Charter (RESC) Ref. JP 2849 Duration: 01/01/2014 - 31/12/2014</p>	<p>To enable lawyers in the beneficiary countries to successfully litigate cases based on the ECHR and on the Revised European Social Charter (RESC), in proceedings before national courts, as well as before the ECtHR in the case of well-substantiated claims, and to avoid submission to the ECtHR of manifestly unfounded or inadmissible claims.</p>	<p>In general, the quality of ECHR knowledge among lawyers and human rights defenders has increased, especially on matters of discrimination. Thus, a favourable environment is created for the harmonised implementation of the ECHR standards in the Republic of Moldova by legal professionals and human rights defenders.</p> <p>The national capacities to train and retrain lawyers and human rights defenders on selected Articles of the ECHR through the prism of Article 14 and Protocol No. 12 of the ECHR, as well as the RESC have been improved and the pool of trainers is available in the Republic of Moldova to deliver such training to lawyers, human rights defenders, as well as other legal professionals. Furthermore, opportunities were provided for regional networking with colleagues and discussing issues of common interest, as well as sharing experiences and learning successful practices from each other and the invited presenters (i.e. during an international conference held in December 2014 in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova).</p> <p>Further to the work of national consultants on the adaptation of HELP non-discrimination curricula, the latter has become a comprehensive course containing both national and international standards, references to national jurisprudence and legal provisions.</p>
<p>Implementing pilot, "quasi-pilot" judgements and judgements revealing systemic and structural problems in the field of detention on remand and remedies to challenge conditions of detention Ref. VC 2748 Duration: 01/06/2012-30/06/2015</p>	<p>Facilitate the implementation of ECHR's judgments revealing systemic and structural problems in the field of detention on remand and remedies to challenge detention conditions</p>	<p>Preventive and compensatory remedies to challenge conditions of detention were set up. The national authorities' understanding of the Court's requirements for the preventive and compensatory remedies was increased which resulted in clarification of the type of measures needed for the setting up of these remedies. The comprehensive action plan was drawn up to respond to the European Court's judgments. The raising awareness of the Convention's requirements and standards of other Council of Europe bodies (CPT) resulted in making parallels with domestic legislation. The exchange of experience with other countries provided incentives in dealing with the issue of conditions of detention, preventive and compensatory remedies, ad-hoc and long-term measures to reduce prison population.</p>

<p>Reinforcing the fight against ill-treatment and impunity Ref. JP 2628 Duration: 01/07/2011 - 31/03/2014</p>	<p>Further development of the regulatory framework and support to the complaint systems which meet international standards: improving legislation/sub-legislation and reinforcing the institutional system and operational capacity for effective investigation of complaints of ill-treatment in line with applicable European and international human rights standards, including the CPT recommendations, the case law of the ECtHR and the Istanbul Protocol, leading to imposition of sanctions when appropriate.</p>	<p>The policy of zero tolerance of ill-treatment was included in the Human Rights Action Plan and the Strategy for Justice Sector Reform 2011-2016, adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova in 2011. The number of national court verdicts based on the ECHR standards has grown steadily and prosecutorial practices also gradually aligned with the same standards. Accordingly, there is a tendency of decrease in the number of applications referring to infringements of Article 3 of the ECHR lodged against the ECHR partner countries and the Republic of Moldova in particular. Since 2012 a number of significant legislative improvements was growing including amendments of the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes. In 2013, a significant decrease in the complaints by detainees was observed, showing diminished impunity, improved discipline of prison staff and respect for the rights of prisoners. Work has been furthered in the area of improvement of the legal framework prohibiting torture and ill-treatment, and the amendment of the regulations concerning the protection of detainees in police custody.</p> <p>A significant number of judges, prosecutors, lawyers, legal staff of the national the authorities were trained on European standards for combating ill-treatment and its effective investigation. Further to comprehensive programmes of exchange of best practices and training activities, knowledge and skills were transferred on the CPT standards and the ECtHR case law, under Articles 3, 5, and 6 of the ECHR, thus enabling these professional groups to better perform their work. The statistics of 2013-2014 indicate a positive trend in sentencing perpetrators of ill-treatment. Finally, regional co-operation and synergy have been strongly promoted through extensive horizontal contacts and regular exchange of experiences between peer institutions from the partner countries.</p>
<p>CHAPTER 6. Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) Programme for the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova</p>		
<p>Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) for the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova Ref. VC 2985 Duration: 01/01/2013 - 30/06/2015</p>	<p>To facilitate a peer-to-peer dialogue on both banks of the river Nistru/Dniestr in the fields where the CoE has specific competence such as human rights protection in places of detention and in media and social spheres.</p>	<p>The CoE CBM Programme has reached a significant number of people thus establishing or reinforcing cross-river contacts. People to people exchanges resulted in increased openness to cross-river interaction.</p> <p>The programme is seen by both sides as a neutral framework that focuses on resolution of technical issues at the professional level. At present, the Council of Europe, through the implementation of its CBMs programme, is the only international organisation with regular and unhindered access to the Transnistrian region that maintains constructive working relations with authorities in the penitentiary and social sectors in Chisinau and Tiraspol.</p>

APPENDIX III**LIST OF DONORS**

1. European Union
2. Austria
3. Denmark
4. Finland
5. Germany
6. Liechtenstein
7. Netherlands
8. Norway
9. Romania
10. Switzerland
11. United Kingdom

APPENDIX IV FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Action Plan revised budget: **€17.3 million**
 Funding Secured: **€7.5 million**

Table 1: GENERAL BUDGET (in Euro)

Type of project	Funding secured				Total funding secured
	Ordinary Budget	EU/CoE Programmes*	Joint	Voluntary Contributions	
TOTAL	636,688	2,779,615		4,056,008	7,472,311

Table 2: BUDGET BY PILLAR (in Euro)

Sectors		Total funds secured
1.	Functioning Democratic Institutions and Good Governance	545,115
2.	Justice Sector Reform and Independence of the Judiciary	3,554,000
3.	Protection and Promotion of Human Rights	1,619,326
4.	Freedom and Pluralism of Media	400,000
5.	Local Democracy and Decentralisation	0
6.	Confidence Building Measures	1,353,870
	TOTAL	7,472,311 €

*Including Council of Europe Ordinary Budget contribution of € 1 039 333 to the EU/CoE Joint Programmes.